

Family Relations and Family Law in the Byzantine Countryside of the Eleventh Century: An Analysis of the Praktikon of 1073

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The analysis presented here is based primarily on the famous *πρακτικὸν τῆς παραδόσεως* of 1073.¹ This is a detailed inventory of a state property located in the *episkepsis* (fiscal district) ta Alopeka, near Miletos, and transferred to the *proto-proedros* Andronikos Doukas in accordance with a chrysobull of Michael VII.² In its substance, the praktikon forms a fragment of the state tax cadaster that, following the emperor's order, takes into consideration all the changes that occurred in the estate up to the time that the chrysobull was issued.

The praktikon as a type of official document has been thoroughly studied by many scholars, especially by Angeliki Laiou in her book on the peasantry in the late Byzantine Empire, in which the author made a number of extremely valuable demographic observations concerning the *paroikoi*.³ My purpose is to develop her observations, since Laiou dealt primarily with the sources of the thirteenth through fifteenth centuries, and only occasionally and comparatively drew upon the eleventh-century documents, including the praktikon of 1073.

I will dwell, first and foremost, on the data contained in this source concerning the structure of the *paroikos* family, family relations, and the law of the family. As for the paroikos' right to property and his relations with the fisc and the lord, I will leave these questions aside, since these aspects of

the praktikon of 1073 were discussed in my book, published more than ten years ago.⁴

To begin with, I am assuming that the praktikon was compiled in accordance with the formulary (or one of the formularies) used by the Genikon. The purpose of the state official—the *anagrapheus* or *epoptes*—was first of all to safeguard the interests of the fisc. To achieve this end he followed, when listing the families of paroikoi, the uniform outline of the model inventory, the main items of which were: (1) the name of the head of the family, i.e., the master of the household (*stasis*), responsible for the payment of fiscal levies; (2) the name of the master's main heir, who had to assume the obligations of the head of the family after his death; (3) other persons entitled to succession (in order of priority), who were indicated if special family circumstances so required; (4) the status of the head of the household (as related to his property and the fisc) as well as the number and kind of livestock owned (horses, donkeys, oxen, cows, pigs); and (5) the amount of tax imposed upon the stasis, expressed in monetary terms.

The official, however, combined formalistic and legalistic principles of documentation with a realistic approach: for instance, he deviated from the standardized model when forced by the peculiarities of the family in question.⁵ The importance of the state cadaster, as well as of the fragment extracted from it, is not limited to the fiscal data it contains. The cadaster and the praktikon alike describe not only the rights of the fisc but also those

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¹Βυζαντινὰ ἔγγραφα τῆς μονῆς Πάτμου, Β.' Δημοσίων λειτουργῶν, ed. M. Nustazopoulou-Pelekidou (Athens, 1980), pp. 11–13.

²Βυζαντινὰ ἔγγραφα τῆς μονῆς Πάτμου, Α.' Ἀυτοκρατορικά, ed. E. L. Vranouse (Athens, 1980), pp. 4–8.

³Angeliki E. Laiou-Thomadakis, *Peasant Society in the Late Byzantine Empire: A Social and Demographic Study* (Princeton, 1977).

⁴G. G. Litavrin, *The Byzantine Society and State in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries: Problems of History between 976 and 1081* (in Russian) (Moscow, 1977), 53–66, 217–20, etc.

⁵In this article I do not discuss all the arguments arising from comparative analysis, since that would be too lengthy.

of the paroikoi themselves to their property and to succession; they regulate relations within the family and protect, among other things, the rights of the widow, children, and grandchildren of the head of the family from the claims of collateral relatives and affinal kin.

The praktikon of 1073 contains a list of the families of paroikoi of eight villages, usually called *proasteia*: 13 households in the *oikoproasteion* Baris,⁶ 10 in the proasteion Olynthos, 7 in the proasteion Gamma, 5 in the proasteion Berboulidion, and 13 in the proasteion Galaides. In three villages property seems to be of smaller scale: two families in the proasteion Melanoudion, one family in the proasteion Mantrakle, and one nearby (line 276). The proasteion (also characterized as *chorion*) Prinos is described as "uninhabited" (line 278). All in all, 51 households are listed in the inventory, comprising 114 persons of whom 63 are male and 51 female. Twenty-eight households are each held by a complete conjugal pair which possesses full rights on the stasis; one of the households includes two conjugal pairs, one of which is subordinate to the head of household. Of the other 23 households, twelve are headed by widows (one more widow is listed as living in the family of her mother-in-law), five by widowers, two by single men, three by young unmarried men, and one by an unmarried woman. In other words, 45 percent of households are held by incomplete families. In 15 households there are no children; as for the households headed by widows, in only one of them are no children mentioned.

Some principles of recording followed by the official are not evident at first sight. In 28 cases, the name of the head of household is accompanied by a note indicating that he or she is a widow(er), son or daughter, brother- or son-in-law of a certain person, whose name is given. The only explanation of such a selective approach that I can suggest is that the replacement of the head of household took place on the eve of the most recent cadaster; this supplementary note must indicate from whom the stasis was inherited or from what family division it originated.⁷ At the same time, this note would legalize the rights of the new master. Thus, of 28 new heads of households, nine succeeded to their fathers, seven their husbands, seven "the

widows," that is, their mothers, and five resulted from divisions of households.

On the other hand, the heads of 23 households remained unchanged—they were listed in the same way as in the survey preceding the most recent cadaster. In other words, the indication concerning the succession of the stasis was inserted into the cadaster only once, after the change of master; in the next survey, the note concerning the former head of the household was omitted.

If this observation is correct, we acquire a means of establishing relative age distinctions among the heads of households. It goes without saying that cadasters have other data that allow us to draw conclusions concerning the age of members of families listed in the inventory: the mention of married sons, of the master's grandchildren, of married granddaughters, and so on. But evidence of this kind is rare, and if it is absent, the above-mentioned note (or the lack of such a note) in the cadaster concerning the recent replacement of the head of the stasis remains the only indication that allows us to establish the approximate age of the head of the family.

Fiscal cadasters in the Byzantine Empire were usually revised every fifteenth year (fifteen years forming the so-called cycle of indiction). Accordingly, the head of the family in a stasis that did not undergo a change of master before the most recent fiscal survey could not be younger than at least thirty or thirty-five. We may assume that in our case the most recent cadaster on whose basis the praktikon was compiled had been issued in 1072 and the preceding one in 1057. Those who came into possession of staseis had to be at least fifteen, reaching the so-called "second age of maturity" (the "first age," that of full-fledged legal rights, being that of twenty-five). Thus, when the survey does not indicate replacement of the master of the stasis, we may assume that the head of the family belonged to an older generation. Unfortunately, this conclusion cannot be reversed: we have no way of calculating the age of the person who had inherited the household in cases when the survey mentioned his or her predecessor—the solution must depend on an unknown factor, the age at which the preceding master had died. I suggest that in approximately 40 percent of cases the heads of households were relatively young peasants (under 30–35).

In this connection I would like to emphasize a detail reflected in the praktikon and typical of

⁶ The total number is 14 families, but judging by the tax paid by the entire village, one family of aktemones was missing in the cadaster.

⁷ Cf. Laiou, *Peasant Society*, 78.

the organization and knowledge of the Genikon: its functionaries obtained information about the name of the peasant responsible for the tax payment (in other words, the head of household) during the period of validity (the fifteen-year indication) of the current cadaster and during the period of validity of the following fiscal survey (the other fifteen years) when the successor (whose name was already known) was supposed to be vested with the rights to the household. It is plausible to surmise that the detailed information stored in the Genikon allowed officials to exercise the rule according to which the master (or his heir) who had abandoned an impoverished stasis could return, without being deprived of his rights, during the next thirty-year period.⁸

The number of successors is defined by the praktikon in a different way—they can be one, two, or more; male and female heirs are treated differently. It is obvious that in each family males possessed priority: as a rule, their names precede those of females. It is obvious as well that the order of succession was based primarily on the principle of lineal descent: from grandfather to father to son to grandson; the praktikon does not contain a single case when a stasis would have been bequeathed to an uncle, brother, or nephew, that is, to collateral relatives. Their exclusion from inheriting the allotments of paroikoi (and of peasants in general) seems to be the norm not only in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, but also at the time of this praktikon.⁹ The right of siblings (brothers and sisters alike) of the head of the household would come into effect through a claim on part of the property (via its division) rather than through inheritance.

I am confident that families of the paroikoi included the master's collateral relatives (uncles, aunts, nephews), as well as adult brothers and sisters, and so on. They simply were not registered by the surveyors, since they had no right to inherit the stasis and possessed no household of their own.

If the family included an older couple, the husband was always considered the head of the stasis. It was not always the case, however, that his son (even if he was at hand) became his first successor. The principle that arranged inheritance on the ba-

sis of male descendance did not exclude priority of the widow (and mother). Following the death of her spouse, it was she who became mistress of the stasis. It was her name that was put in the cadaster right after her husband's. If the name of the wife does not appear in the list, the only explanation is that the head of the household had no spouse. According to the praktikon of 1073, five widows assumed the place of head of the stasis even before the preceding survey; seven widowed mistresses died in the period between the two surveys; and seven women, after having buried their husbands, were vested with households on the eve of the most recent cadaster. It happens that the number of widows did not change between the two surveys: there were twelve both at the beginning and at the end of the period. They preserved their status as heads of household even if their son or daughter was married.

As for widowers, they can be distinguished from single men (unmarried) only if their children or grandchildren are listed in the praktikon, or if the text speaks of a priest whose spouse is not named in the register. However, we can assume that some widowers were childless and others had married their daughters off or gave their sons separate allotments. I think that, among the peasants described in the praktikon of 1073, five heads of households were unquestionably widowers (they live with children and/or grandchildren). Two peasants are single but not young: they are childless (at least, according to the praktikon) but acquired their staseis long ago. Three masters are unmarried young paroikoi who were but recently vested with their staseis. We can observe a typical phenomenon: among the heads of household, there are two and a half times more widows than widowers. It is plausible to suggest that men died by natural causes or perished earlier than females; it cannot be excluded as well that men entered a second marriage more frequently than did widows and that their second wives were not former widows. The praktikon of 1073 testifies to the fact that the predominant part of the "widow" allotments (both former, i.e., inherited by children, and actual) consisted of staseis possessed by *aktemones*. It does not seem accidental that two out of three young single heads of household inherited their allotments (characterized as "belonging to *aktemones*") from widowed mothers. It appears that a poor single man, not only a poor widow, faced obstacles that prevented him from marrying. This

⁸Litavrin, *Byzantine Society*, 206 f; see also N. Oikonomides, "Das Verfalland im 10.–11. Jahrhundert: Verkauf und Besteuerung," *Fontes Minores* 7 (1986), 161–68.

⁹Cf. Laiou, *Peasant Society*, 78, 88.

observation sheds some light on the “geography” of “widow” lands. The richest village in our praktikon was Galaides: of twelve households there, nine belonged to *zeugaratoi*, and only three to *aktemones*. In this village, not a single stasis was held by a widow. Some time earlier, two widows lived in the village, but both had died before the latest survey and both left behind indigent (“of *aktemones*”) households. One may wonder whether this was the reason why the widows’ sons remained single—they could not afford to have a family. On the contrary, Gamma, one of the poorest villages, consisted almost entirely of “widow” allotments (five out of seven); they represent, however, a broader gamut: two households were held by *zeugaratoi*, one by a *boidatos*, and two by *aktemones*; one more household, also possessed by an *aktemon*, had recently belonged to a widow.

As mentioned above, the wife of the head of the household was his first heir. The fiscal official, however, was instructed to indicate at least one more of the elder couple’s principal heirs (besides the potential widow or widower). First and foremost, that was the son. It is far from clear, however, whether minors and infants were registered—the question remains open to discussion.¹⁰ The task of the fiscal functionary was to ascertain the continuous functioning of the stasis as a fiscal unit; this task could not be achieved had the successor (minor or infant) been unable to work on the land. On the other hand, a minor or an infant could not be deprived of his (her) legal rights to the allotment. My analysis of the praktikon of 1073 allows us to surmise that an only son of a *paroikos*, regardless of his age, was mandatorily listed in the cadaster as his parents’ principal heir. If he was a minor and accordingly unable to work on the land, the praktikon obligatorily included one more member of the family, who was entitled to the inheritance after the only son. Such a case is described in the paragraph on the village Gamma: the widow Stratego is said to have not only a son (George) but also a daughter (Anna) (line 157)—I consider her to be George’s older sister, already able to work.

Let us now investigate a case of a family with several sons. Can we assume that all of them were named in the survey? The praktikon of 1073 contains three clauses indicating the names (unquestionably, in order of seniority) of two male siblings: Leo and Basil, sons of John Skrinos, in the village

of Berboulidion (line 163); Leo and John, sons of George Sideras (line 170); and Leo and George, sons of Maurogeorgios (line 172), in the village of Galaides. Is it possible to assume that, first, only in twenty-one families (of a total of 52) were there sons living together with parents; that, second, only in three families were there two sons; and third, that in no family on the entire estate were there three sons or more? Certainly, there must have existed quite a few families in which the adult sons left their nests and formed their own households. Nevertheless, I suspect that the survey did not register all the sons of the families. We must take into account that in all the cases in which the names of two sons are given we cannot observe replacement of the head of the household, that is, the heads of families are not young, and accordingly their sons are probably not minors, and are able to work. This is why their names were registered in the cadaster, most probably in order of seniority. As for their minor siblings, these were not included in the list if at least one brother able to work lived in the household.

Now we must briefly analyze the situation of the wives of adult sons who lived together with their parents or with one of them. In the praktikon there is not a single mention of daughters-in-law. However, it would be misleading to jump to the conclusion that all married sons left their parental abode. An exceptional case is to be found in the survey of the village Gamma: Kale, a widow, lives together with her daughter-in-law (*nymphē*) Anna and grandson John (line 158); it is quite plausible that Anna’s husband (Kale’s son) was dead. It is worth noting that Anna’s name is placed ahead of John’s, which means that she was thought to have prior right to the inheritance.¹¹ This family structure may probably be explained by the concurrence of several factors: the grandson is a minor or an infant; the widow’s household is large (“of *zeugaratos*”), and the daughter-in-law is the main laborer in the household who secures the stasis’ ability to pay taxes. It is not the grandson but the daughter-in-law who assumed the rights of the deceased son of the household to the potential inheritance. As the mother of a minor, who was (also) entitled to his grandmother’s (i.e., his father’s) stasis, she did not threaten her son’s situation: even in the case of a second marriage and the birth of

¹⁰On the discussion see *ibid.*, 268–69, 293–95.

¹¹Cf. the observations of Laiou on the 13th–14th century cadasters (the daughter-in-law is always named after her son): *ibid.*, 106.

more children, his primogeniture and property rights could not be questioned.

I am convinced that in the family in which the married son lived together with his father or his father's widow, other relatives—his spouse, the daughter-in-law of the elder couple, as well as the children of the younger couple (the master's grandchildren being subordinate members of the household)—were not listed in the cadaster. From the fiscal point of view, it sufficed to list, besides the name of the head of the family, the name of his wife and their eldest son, the main successors. The spouse of the son of the family and their children will appear in the cadaster only when he himself, after the death of his parents, becomes an independent head of a household.

The legal situation appears better attested. I assume that even the name of the elder daughter (or daughters) of the head of the stasis entered the cadaster only in three cases: when she was the only heiress; when her brother (who always enjoyed priority in the right of succession regardless of his age) was a minor; and finally, when she got married and her husband settled in the family of his in-laws. In such families, after the death of the head of the household, the right to the stasis accorded by law to the daughter was transferred to the son-in-law, her husband, who, in the new circumstances, became the head of the family. I surmise that the son-in-law living with his wife's family was, unlike the daughter-in-law, necessarily mentioned in the cadaster: first, because of the need to note in the survey the name of the future head of the stasis, and second, because of the need to protect the rights of his wife, the daughter of the former master and the mother of their grandchildren who were, together with her, legitimate heirs to the household. Had his wife died and the former son-in-law married a second wife, the threat to the children of the first marriage would be more considerable than in the case of the daughter-in-law (whose chances for a second marriage were low), and therefore his legal status (son-in-law living with the parents of his wife) should be indicated from the very beginning, right after his entry into the new household, that is, during the first fiscal survey. In such cases the son-in-law's name appeared at the end of the list of family members.

The praktikon of 1073 registers the names of four sons-in-law (*gambroi*). One case is exceptional: Constantine, *gambros* of George Phatyris (line 168), has an independent household, and the relationship between the two men was mentioned in the

survey, probably only owing to the fact that the father-in-law helped, at his daughter's marriage, to set up the new stasis by giving a dowry; the fiscal official, by noting the relationship of Phatyris and "Constantine, his son-in-law," stressed that the new stasis originated from the father-in-law's material assistance. Three other cases are those of the sons-in-law "patrilocally" settled: two were married to the daughters (lines 144 and 258) and the third to a granddaughter of the head of the stasis (line 276). In the latter case, the family property is not described—the praktikon only characterizes the peasant, George Anemotriches, as *paroikos proska-themenos*, a term that could designate (although not necessarily) a recently settled paroikos. Three other mentions of *gambroi* refer to well-off families of *zeugaratoi*. I assume that the praktikon listed all the sons-in-law living on the estate. If this assumption is correct, one can conclude that well-off peasant families had better chances of marrying off their daughters and finding *gambroi*.

Let us now return to the status of daughters in the family. As mentioned above, they were infrequently included in the list of family members: aside from two married daughters, only six other *thygateres* appear in the praktikon which names at least twenty sons. This enormous disproportion of the sex composition (8:21) cannot be explained either by higher female mortality (boys were better cared for) or by reference to the "sex ratio" (in the area of Thessalonica in the fourteenth century the sex ratio vacillated between 115 and 108).¹² In other words, the number of women enrolled in the praktikon of 1073 is understated at the expense, first of all, of daughters and daughters-in-law who continued to live patrilocally. In my opinion, about half of the female population is missing from the praktikon.

Grandsons and granddaughters are rarely mentioned as well: only one grandson and one granddaughter appear in the entire praktikon. This abnormality can hardly be believed to reflect reality. It is noteworthy that both representatives of the third generation are named in special circumstances: in the village of Gamma, *engonos* John is preceded by his female relatives only—nymphé Anna and the head of the stasis, Kale (line 158); it is most probable that both his father (Kale's son) and his grandfather Photeinos died, and John became the legitimate heir to the household. In the other case, granddaughter Anna is mentioned to-

¹² Cf. *ibid.*, 269, 295.

gether with her husband John (line 276), and we have seen above that the son-in-law living in the house of his parents-in-law was mentioned together with (and after) his wife. Gambros John was the potential head of the household, the more so that Anna's father Michael and Anna's grandfather George Anemotriches were widowers (at any rate, their spouses are not mentioned in the praktikon). It is quite possible that the rights of men married into their wives' families were in direct dependence upon the situation of their wives and children.

Summing up this analysis of the structure of the paroikoi families described in the praktikon of 1073 and of family law as revealed by it, I would like to emphasize once more that the cadaster omitted a substantial number of both blood relatives and relatives by affinity of the heads of household; they were omitted because they were excluded from the right of succession or because, at this time, it was premature to define them as upcoming successors—either they were minors, or those who had priority were still alive. The cadaster omitted all the collateral relatives (both male and female), the wives of the sons who lived in the households of their parents and grandparents, the sisters of adult brothers and the sisters of older heiresses, the children of subordinate couples and grandchildren of the heads of households (save for exceptional cases), and so on. The omission of the female section of the household seems to have been more significant than that of its male counterpart. Therefore I suppose that first of all the real ratio of the male and female population was not 55.2:44.8 (as it follows from the figures of the praktikon accepted at their face value) but was closer to the regular sex composition, that is, females prevail over males by one or two percent, and second, that the real number of paroikoi who lived on the estate was at least twice that listed in the praktikon: not 114 but 220–250 men and women. In other words, the average size of the paroikoi family calculated by Laiou as consisting of four persons in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries¹³ appears, in the light of this analysis, to be a low rather than a high estimate.

In conclusion, I would like to touch upon two topics: the nature of the division of paroikoi families and a certain evidence of the survival of the village community in the estate conferred upon Andronikos Doukas.

In my opinion, the praktikon contains four indisputable cases of family division and one that can be questioned. The first division took place in the village of Olynthos: George, the son of John Saponas ("soap-maker")—probably the elder son—separated from the family, presumably during his father's lifetime because of his marriage (he has a wife and daughter); then his father's stasis was inherited by his widowed mother Maria, who lived there with her (younger?) son Michael; both staseis—the paternal one and that of George, the separate one—are well-off, each possessing a *zeugarion* (lines 149–50), whatever that means. We can assume that the late John Saponas owned two *zeugaria*. Even though both staseis are "of zeugaratoi," the filial share seems to be less well-off than the paternal one. (The paternal stasis pays three nomismata, three miliaresia, and ten folleis, whereas we can calculate that the payment of the filial share was only a nomisma and a half).

The second case appears in the same village of Olynthos. The survey for this village mentions four times the *horophylakes* ("guardians of the boundary/landmark"): the late Basil horophylax; Kyriakos horophylax, who had a wife and a son, George; John, Basil's son, who owned—after his father's (recent) demise—the paternal household and lived there with his son, also named Kyriakos; and finally, a certain George, the son of the horophylax (lines 151–52). Who is this "horophylax" named in the latter clause? Obviously he is not Kyriakos, whose son George is separately mentioned—it would not be possible for two sons of the same Kyriakos to bear the same first name. It is hard to believe that in the small proasteion there was another "horophylax" besides Basil, whether we interpret the word as denoting an office or as a sobriquet (family name). It is also hard to accept that the fiscal official who tried to achieve clarity and precision in the document of taxation (the clause "George, the son of the horophylax" was to indicate the new tenant, and the note "son of X" must unequivocally define from whom and on which ground the stasis was transferred) kept in mind an alien person and described him in such a slovenly way. Therefore I suggest that both George and John were sons of the late "horophylax" Basil and that George separated himself during his father's lifetime. John, a widower (his son, Kyriakos, lived with him), inherited the paternal stasis, whereas George was single—a childless widower or unmarried man. So far as the paternal stasis is concerned (it now belongs to John), the praktikon

¹³ Ibid., 7, 40 f.

states that “it used to be of boidatos,” that is, it became (as we can judge on the basis of the payment) “of aktemon.” This means that its status decreased. The separated stasis owned by George is also “of aktemon.” It is quite plausible to assume that the division of the stasis, in this case also, led to the decrease of the peasants’ material status.

The third case of family division has already been described: George Phatyris, from the village of Galaides, married his daughter Eirene to a certain Constantine (line 168) and provided his son-in-law with the means of starting a new household. Even though both families are well-off, the paternal stasis seems to be richer and pays higher taxes: 3 against Constantine’s 2½ nomismata. In any event, the division weakened the initial household.

The fourth case also took place in the village of Galaides: Leo, brother of Sideras (“ironsmith”), married and, probably because of this, separated from George Sideras, who lived with two sons. Presumably, in this case also, the division accounts for the subsequent weakening of the economic unit.

The fifth case is more problematic. My suggestion is based only on the analysis of the names of the paroikoi involved. In the proasteion Berboulidion there was the stasis of a certain John Tzamines, married to an Anna, and another stasis held by a widow Anna Tzaminena who lived without dependents (lines 164–65); John is characterized as boidatos and Anna possessed a zeugarion. Anna lost her husband long ago, and John is also an old tenant. A question arises concerning the kind of relationship between John and Anna Tzaminena, whose second name testifies to the fact that her husband was a Tzamines. Who was this late Tzamines—John’s father, brother, uncle, or nephew? Any of these is possible, since the widow Anna could be John’s mother, sister-in-law, aunt, et cetera. The scarce data contained in the praktikon is insufficient to solve this problem. If one of the two first assumptions is valid, we must conclude that these clauses record a family division and that it took place a long time ago. We must conclude as well that this case reveals a general tendency toward impoverishment and that the separated stasis (that of John) was weaker than the “maternal” one.

Thus family divisions resulted, as a rule, in an impoverishment of the paroikoi families. To some extent, it explains the fact that the wealthiest fam-

ilies in the praktikon of 1073 are at the same time the most prolific, possess more manpower; this statement also refers to well-off staseis (“of zeugaratos”) that belonged to widows. The accommodation of sons-in-law by households of this kind reflects an understandable desire to avoid the division of property. The rich household had the ability to attract and absorb new manpower.¹⁴

Finally, the last question: whether we find traces of the village community in the estate conferred upon Andronikos Doukas. Contrary to my previous opinion (I questioned the existence of definite signs of the village community in the praktikon of 1073),¹⁵ I am now inclined to give a positive answer to this question. The evidence for this much-debated institution I now see in the office of the so-called horophylax that used to be held by boidatos Basil, who was replaced by 1073 by Kyriakos. I hypothesize that Kyriakos was elected to this community assignment after Basil’s death. This office, testified to in Egyptian papyri,¹⁶ denoted a “guardian of a boundary/landmark” (*Grenzwächter*, according to Preisigke). Due to the paucity of sources, the interpretation of the term is difficult. I surmise that the “guardian of a boundary,” elected at the community meeting, had to keep safe not the estate as a unit (owned previously by the fisc and, from 1073 onward, by Andronikos Doukas), nor the boundaries between those fields of the peasants that were assigned by the lord to his paroikoi (this was the function of the lord’s bailiff and not of the paroikoi themselves), but the integrity of parcels and pastures owned by the paroikoi, that is, the land that peasants (at any rate, the zeugaratoi and boidatoi) as *hypostatikoi* held at their full disposal.

If this is correct, it supports the idea that I developed in my book on Byzantine society and the state in the tenth and eleventh centuries: the paroikoi held land under two different conditions. A part was held from the lord, and for that they paid him *choropakton*; another part was held from the state, and for that they were obliged to pay a tax.

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¹⁴ Ibid., 87.

¹⁵ See Litavrin, *Byzantine Society*, 65.

¹⁶ F. Preisigke, *Wörterbuch der griechischen Papyrusurkunden*, II (Berlin, 1927), 202.